



## Brunei

### Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2001](#)

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Brunei Darussalam, a small, wealthy monarchy, is a sultanate ruled by the same family for 600 years. The 1959 Constitution provided for the first delegation of political power by the late Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin to an appointed council of state, but in 1962 he invoked an article of the Constitution that allowed him to assume emergency powers for 2 years. These powers have been regularly renewed, most recently in July 2000. In August 2000, the Foreign Minister confirmed that a review of the Constitution had been submitted to the Sultan for approval, and that "an element of an election" was in this report. Although not all the articles of the Constitution are suspended, the state of emergency places few limits on the Sultan's power. The Sultan also serves as Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, Minister of Finance, Chancellor of the national university, Superintendent General of the Royal Brunei Police Force, and leader of the Islamic faith. The Constitution does not specifically provide for an independent judiciary; however, in general the courts appear to act independently.

The police force, which has responsibility for internal security, and which includes an Internal Security Department, reports to the Sultan, who maintains firm control over it.

Brunei's large oil and natural gas reserves, coupled with its population of 340,000, give it a high per capita gross domestic product of over \$14,000. The worldwide recovery in oil prices that began in 1998 has helped restore the country's cash flow; however, the economy still continued to feel the effects of the Amedeo Development Corporation's 1997-98 collapse. The Government accused the Corporation's head, the Sultan's brother Prince Jefri, of misappropriating \$16 billion of the country's foreign reserves.

The Government generally respected its citizens' human rights in several areas; however, its record was poor in other areas, particularly with regard to civil liberties, and problems remain. In practice citizens do not have the right to change their government, and they generally avoid political activity of any kind. Constitutional provisions notwithstanding, citizens do not genuinely exercise the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association. Other human rights problems continued, including restrictions on religious freedom and discrimination against women. Despite government efforts, occasional societal violence against women remains a problem. Labor rights are circumscribed, and foreign workers, particularly in the garment sector, are subject to exploitation.

#### RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

##### Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

###### a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports of the arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life committed by the Government or its agents.

###### b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

###### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law prohibits mistreatment of prisoners, and there were no reports of such mistreatment. Caning is mandatory punishment for 42 drug-related and other criminal offenses and for vandalism. Sentences of caning are carried out in the presence of a doctor who monitors implementation and has the authority to interrupt and postpone the punishment for medical reasons. Caning generally is included as part of the sentencing in 80 percent of criminal convictions. Many convicted persons reportedly prefer caning to lengthy incarceration.

Prison conditions generally meet international standards. There is no overcrowding; however, there is a growing prison population. Prisoners receive regular medical checkups. Remand cells at police stations are Spartan.

Human rights monitors are not known to have requested prison visits; however, foreign diplomats have visited prisoners. Family members also may visit prisoners and bring food.

#### d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The law provides for a prompt judicial determination regarding the validity of an arrest. However, those provisions, like the Constitution itself, may be superseded, either partially or wholly, through invocation of the emergency powers. The Internal Security Act (ISA) permits the Government to detain suspects without trial for renewable 2-year periods. The Government occasionally has used the ISA to detain persons suspected of antigovernment activity; however, information on the detainees is published only after they are released. Muhammad Yasin Abdul Rahman, age 76, who played a pivotal role in the abortive 1962 rebellion, was detained without trial for 12 years from 1962 to 1973, when he escaped from prison to live in exile in Malaysia. He returned to the country in 1997 and immediately was arrested and detained once more without trial. In 1999 he was released from detention after swearing an oath of loyalty to the Sultan and admitting his political "crimes."

In 1998 authorities briefly detained several citizens under the ISA for distributing allegedly defamatory letters containing allegations about the royal family and senior government officials connected with the collapse of the Amedeo Group, a large holding company headed by the former Finance Minister and Sultan's brother, Prince Jefri. The Government warned citizens that it would take action against anyone involved in such activities. There were no known arrests for publishing or distributing antigovernment literature during the year.

In late 2000 and early 2001, the Government used the ISA to detain at least seven Christian citizens for alleged subversive activities. All were released during the year, the last three in October. Government officials maintain that the detentions were for security not religious reasons (see Section 2.c.).

Normally a magistrate must endorse a warrant for arrest. Warrants are issued without this endorsement on rare occasions, such as when police are unable to obtain the endorsement in time to prevent the flight of a suspect. Police officers have broad powers to make arrests, without warrants, of persons caught in the physical act of committing a crime.

Under a colonial-era law, the Sultan may forcibly exile either permanently or temporarily any person deemed to be a threat to the safety, peace, or welfare of the country. Since independence there have been no cases of banishment of citizens.

#### e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution does not specifically provide for an independent judiciary. However, in 1996 in a landmark legal decision, the appellate-level High Court ruled that the court has powers independent of the prosecution and ordered a discharge in a car theft case under review, which amounted to an acquittal under the Criminal Procedure Code. The Government has not yet challenged the court's finding that magistrates have the legal power to discharge and acquit a defendant, even when the prosecution does not request the discharge. In general the courts appear to act independently.

The judicial system consists of five levels of courts, with final recourse in civil cases available through the Privy Council in London. Procedural safeguards include the right to defense counsel, the right to an interpreter, the right to a speedy trial, and the right to confront accusers. There were no known instances of government interference with the judiciary and no trials of political opponents.

The civil law, based on English common law, provides citizens with a fair and efficient judicial process. Shari'a (Islamic law) supersedes civil law in some areas, including divorce, inheritance, and some sexual crimes. Shari'a law is not applied to non-Muslims.

There were no reports of political prisoners.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The law permits government intrusion into the privacy of individual persons, families, or homes; however, such intrusion rarely occurs, except in cases of enforcement of "khalwat," an Islamic prohibition regarding close proximity of a Muslim with a member of the opposite sex who is not one's spouse. The Government at times prevents the importation of foreign newspapers and magazines (see Section 2.a.).

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

Under the emergency powers in effect since 1962, the Government restricts significantly freedom of speech and of the press.

On October 1, legislation that could be used to reduce press freedom significantly took effect. Among other restrictions, it requires that the local newspapers obtain operating licenses, as well as prior government approval of foreign editorial staff, journalists, and printers. The law also gives the Government the right to bar distribution of foreign publications, and requires distributors of foreign publications to obtain a government permit. The new law allows the Government to close a newspaper without prior notice and without showing cause. Journalists deemed to have published or written "false and malicious" reports are subject to fines or prison sentences.

Prior to the promulgation of this new law, there were no laws specifically restricting freedom of speech and freedom of the press; however, the Government used its authority to protect public safety, morals, health, and domestic security to restrict these freedoms. Editions of foreign newspapers or magazines with articles that were found objectionable, embarrassing, or critical of the Sultan, royal family, or government at times were not allowed into the country. Magazine articles with a Christian theme reportedly were censored (see Section 2.c.). However, the growing use of fax machines, the Internet, and access to satellite transmissions make it increasingly difficult to keep such material from entering the country.

The country's largest circulation daily newspaper, the Borneo Bulletin, appeared to practice self-censorship in its choice of topics to avoid angering the Government. However, letters to the editor often included comments critical of the Government's handling of certain social, economic, and environmental issues. In 1999 a second daily English-language newspaper, the News Express, began publication. It also features a letters page where citizens and residents expressed their views and complaints, often about government services and, increasingly, about government policy. The newspapers' willingness to publish these expressions of opinion represented a modest extension of press freedom. The Government on occasion has been responsive to public opinion on some issues concerning social or environmental problems.

Although the only television station is government owned, three Malaysian television channels also are received locally. Two satellite television networks are available, which offer a total of 28 different channels, including the Cable News Network, the British Broadcasting Corporation World News, and several entertainment and sports channels.

The Government's tolerance of political criticism has not been tested lately because there is no organized opposition. Moreover, citizens generally make almost no criticism of the Government. In the past, the Government has not hesitated to arrest those who attempted to propagate unwelcome political views.

The Government places no apparent restrictions on Internet use, which is widespread. Two popular electronic bulletin boards contain postings that are sometimes critical of government actions. The country's primary Internet service provider is state owned.

The Government respects academic freedom.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Under the emergency powers in effect since 1962, the Government restricts significantly the right to assemble. Freedom to assemble for political purposes has not been tested seriously in recent years.

Political parties ostensibly are allowed, but they are not to engage in "activities that endanger people." Membership is open to all citizens, except civil servants and security force personnel, who together make up 60 percent of all employed citizens. The Government in practice permits only one political party to operate, the Brunei Solidarity National Party (PPKB). It held assemblies in February 1995, April 1998, February 2000, and October 2001, reportedly with the consent of the Government. Until its October meeting, the party appeared to be largely inactive and marked by internal strife. In October 1998, the Prime Minister's Office rebuked PPKB President Haji Mohamed Hatta regarding an interview he gave to a regional newsmagazine. The Prime Minister's Office described Hatta's portrayal of Brunei as "irresponsible, untrue, inaccurate, misleading, and embarrassing." Hatta was reelected as PPKB president in October, and the Party has pledged to support government policies.

The activities of international service organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and the Lions continued to be restricted by the Government, which in 1995 reminded local leaders of these organizations that Muslims may not be members. Any nongovernmental organization seeking to operate in the country must apply for permission under the Companies Act.

### c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution states that, "The religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Muslim religion according to the Shafeite sect of that religion: Provided that all other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony by the person professing them in any part of Brunei Darussalam;" however, the Government routinely restricts the practice of non-Islamic religions.

The Government has voiced alarm about "outsiders" preaching radical Islamic fundamentalist or unorthodox beliefs. For example, the Islamist Al-Arqam movement remains banned. Citizens deemed to have been influenced by such preaching (usually students returning from overseas study) have been "shown the error of their ways" in study seminars organized by mainstream Islamic religious leaders. The Government seems more concerned about these so-called Islamic "opportunists" than unwelcome political views. Moreover the Government does not hesitate to investigate and to use its internal security apparatus against persons whom it considers purveyors of radical Islam or non-Muslims who attempt to proselytize.

The Government reinforces the legitimacy of the hereditary monarchy and the observance of traditional and Islamic values by reasserting a national ideology known as the Malayhu Islam Beraja (MIB) or "Malay Muslim monarchy." The Government in 1993 participated in issuing the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which affirms the right of all persons to a wide range of human rights, including freedom of religion. Despite this and constitutional provisions providing for the full and unconstrained exercise of religious freedom, the Government routinely restricts the practice of non-Muslim religions by prohibiting proselytizing; occasionally denying entry to foreign clergy or particular priests, bishops, or ministers; banning the importation of religious teaching materials or scriptures such as the Bible; and ignoring requests to expand, repair, or build new churches, temples, and shrines. However, in 1998, the Government allowed the Catholic Church to establish the first apostolic prefecture in the country and to install a Bruneian of Chinese origin as the country's first apostolic prefect. This development constituted a modest step in the direction of improved religious freedom, but as yet there is no broad trend toward increased religious freedom.

Non-Muslims who proselytize may expect to be arrested or detained, and possibly held without charges for an extended period of time. In late 2000 and early 2001, the Government used the ISA to detain at least seven Christians for allegedly subversive activities; they were not charged with a crime. The detainees subsequently were released, the last three in October. Government officials maintain that the detentions were a security, not a religious, matter (see Section 1.d.).

The Government also routinely censors magazine articles on other faiths, blacking out or removing photographs of crucifixes and other Christian religious symbols. Government officials also guard against the distribution and sale of items featuring undesirable photographs of religious symbols.

The authorities sporadically conduct raids on clubs frequented by foreign residents and foreign workers in order to confiscate alcohol and foodstuffs that were not prepared in accordance with "halal" requirements (the Islamic requirements for the slaughter of animals and the prohibition on inclusion of pork products in any food). These actions are regarded by the majority of citizens as upholding Islam. In July 2000, the Government briefly detained for questioning local members of a small Islamic group after the group's members in Malaysia reportedly were involved in an arms theft.

The Ministry of Education requires courses on Islam or the national ideology, the Malay Muslim monarchy, in all schools. It prohibits the teaching of other religions. The Ministry requires that all students, including non-Muslims, follow a course of study on the Islamic faith and learn the "jawi" (Arabic script). The International

School of Brunei and the Jerudong International School are exempt from these restrictions. Private mission schools are not allowed to give Christian instruction and are required to give instruction about Islam; however, the Government does not prohibit or restrict parents from giving religious instruction to children in their own homes. In January 2000, the Government responded to objections from parents and religious leaders and set aside tentative plans to require that more Islamic courses be taught in private, non-Islamic parochial schools.

The Government requires residents to carry an identity card that states the bearer's religion; however, the Government no longer requires visitors to identify their religion on their landing cards.

#### d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Government restricts the movement of former political prisoners during the first year of their release. Otherwise the Government generally does not restrict the freedom of movement of its citizens, visitors, and permanent residents. Government employees, both citizens and foreigners working on a contractual basis, must apply for approval to go abroad; it is granted routinely.

No legal provision exists for granting temporary refuge, first asylum, or refugee status to those seeking such refuge or asylum. Under the law, persons arriving without valid entry documents and means of support are considered illegal immigrants and are refused entry. There were no reported cases of individuals seeking temporary refuge during the year.

#### Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

Citizens may not change their government; the country is a monarchy, and there are no established democratic processes. Under the continuing state of emergency, there is no parliament, and political authority and control rests with the Sultan. Individuals may seek to express their views or to influence government decisions and policies by writing letters to a local newspaper or by petitioning the Sultan or handing him letters when he appears in public (see Section 2.a.).

A form of popular representation lies in a traditional system of village chiefs who are elected by secret ballot by all adults. These leaders communicate constituents' wishes through a variety of channels, including periodic meetings chaired by the Home Affairs Minister, with several officials appointed by the Sultan. In 1996 the Sultan presided at the first, and thus far only, General Assembly of the "mukim" (a group of villages) and village consultative council. Over 1,000 village chiefs from 150 villages and 35 mukim participated as delegates. The delegates were elected from among individual villagers, and the Government described the Assembly as "a grass roots level political system." However, the Sultan appoints all the council's advisers. Meetings between senior government officials and mukim representatives allow for airing of local grievances and concerns.

The Sultan has an appointed Cabinet, the members of which serve as his principal advisors.

The lack of representative democratic government seriously limits the role of both men and women in government and politics, although women are limited to a greater extent; however, women are making progress. The Sultan's sister, Princess Masna, is the second ranking official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The first female High Court judge was appointed in 1999, since 2000 a woman has been director of the Anticorruption Bureau, and both the Solicitor General and the Assistant Solicitor General are women.

#### Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Any nongovernmental organization seeking to operate in the country must apply for permission under the Companies Act. No government or private organizations deal specifically with the protection of human rights. The Government has a human rights dialog with a foreign embassy. There were no known allegations of abuses or requests to visit by international human rights groups.

#### Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution does not contain specific provisions prohibiting discrimination based on the factors listed above, with the exception of discrimination based on religion (see Section 2.c.).

#### Women

The extent to which spousal abuse may occur, and to which it goes unreported, is not known. In 1999 the police recorded 91 cases of domestic abuse, compared with 72 in 1998. The criminal penalty for a minor domestic assault is 1 to 2 weeks in jail and a fine. An assault resulting in serious injury is punishable by caning and a longer jail sentence.

A special unit exists within the police department to investigate domestic violence complaints. Female officers staff the unit. A hot line is in service for abused spouses and the public to report domestic violence. During 1999 approximately 10 women and their children stayed at a women's shelter run by the Social Affairs Services unit of the Ministry of Culture (more recent figures have not been made available). The Social Affairs Services unit provides counseling for women and their spouses. In 1999 a photograph of a man accused of stabbing his wife and assaulting one of his children was published in a daily newspaper, a new development in a country in which privacy generally is guarded closely. While Islamic courts usually discourage divorce in domestic violence cases, there appears to be a movement away from encouraging wives to reconcile with flagrantly abusive spouses. Islamic religious authorities recognize wife beating as grounds for divorce.

In September 2000, two members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces were sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment and three strokes of the cane for the attempted molestation and sodomy of a 20-year-old deaf girl.

One area of apparent abuse involves female domestic servants (see Sections 6.c., 6.e., and 6.f.). While the level of violence in society is low, the beating of servants--or refusing them the right to leave the house on days off, sometimes on grounds that they "might encounter the wrong company"--is less socially unacceptable behavior. Since most female domestics are foreign workers who are highly dependent on their employers, those subject to abuse may be unwilling or unable to bring complaints, either to the authorities or to their governments' embassies. However, when such complaints are brought, the Government generally is quick to investigate allegations of abuse and impose fines and punishment as warranted.

Prostitution is illegal. Women entering the country for purposes of prostitution generally are deported swiftly (see Section 6.f.).

In accordance with Koranic precepts, women are denied equal status with men in a number of important areas such as divorce, inheritance, and custody of children. Under the law, citizenship is transmitted through the father. Female citizens who are married to foreigners or bear children by foreign fathers cannot transmit citizenship to their children, even when such children are born in the country. This has resulted in a number of "stateless" residents, who are entitled to live in the country and to be documented for travel by the Government, but who do not enjoy the full privileges of citizenship, including the right to own land.

Although men are eligible for permanent positions in government service whether or not they hold university degrees, women who do not have university degrees are eligible to hold government positions only on a month-to-month basis. While some previous inequities have been eliminated, women in month-to-month positions continue to receive slightly less annual leave and fewer allowances than their male and female counterparts in permanent positions.

There are no separate pay scales for men and women, and in recent years there has been a major influx of women into the work force. Women serve in a wide variety of capacities in the armed forces, although they are not permitted to serve in combat. The number of female university graduates is increasing, and nearly two-thirds of Brunei University's entering class is female.

Religious authorities strongly encourage Muslim women to wear the tudong, a traditional head covering, and many women do so. However, some Muslim women do not, and there is no official pressure on non-Muslim women to do so. All female students in government-operated schools are required to wear the tudong; students in nongovernment schools are encouraged to wear it.

In 1999 the Married Women's Law came into effect, improving significantly the rights of non-Muslim married women with respect to maintenance, property, and domestic violence. Changes to the Islamic Family Law (in the section on Women's Position in Marriage and Divorce) came into effect in 1999 and are expected to improve the marital rights of Muslim women.

#### Children

No statistics are published regarding the welfare of children. The strong commitment to family values within society, the high standard of living, and government funding for children's welfare provides most children a healthy and nurturing environment. Education is free, compulsory, and universal for 9 years, after those first 9 years, it is still free but no longer compulsory. With a few exceptions involving small villages in extremely

remote areas, nutritional standards are high, and poverty is almost unknown. Medical care for all citizens, including children, is heavily subsidized and widely available. There were 4 reported cases of child abuse in 2000.

#### Persons with Disabilities

The law does not mandate accessibility or other assistance for persons with disabilities. The Government is attempting to provide educational services for children with disabilities, although these efforts are not yet adequate. Teachers still must be trained to deal with children with disabilities, and some such children have no educational opportunities. A special facility with trained educators is needed to accommodate the children with disabilities who cannot be assimilated into normal classrooms, and the Ministry of Education continued to study the problem.

#### Indigenous People

The 6 percent of the population that is composed of indigenous people long has been integrated into society, and enjoys the same rights as other citizens.

#### National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Some members of non-Malay minorities, such as ethnic Chinese, including those born and raised in the country, are not automatically accorded citizenship and its attendant rights and must travel abroad as stateless persons. The country's colonial-era naturalization laws are viewed widely as out-of-date and in need of reform.

#### Section 6 Worker Rights

##### a. The Right of Association

Trade unions are legal but must be registered with the Government. The Government has not prevented the legal registration of trade unions, nor has it dissolved any. While unions are legal and easy to register, conditions are not conducive to the development of trade unions. There is little interest on the part of workers in forming trade unions, and existing unions are not very active. There are few industries of the kind in which unions traditionally have developed. In addition, cultural tradition favors consensus over confrontation. The three registered trade unions are all in the oil sector and have a total membership amounting to less than 5 percent of that industry's work force. All workers, including civil servants other than those serving in the military and police, may form or join trade unions. Unions are independent of the Government.

The law permits the formation of trade union federations but forbids affiliation with international labor organizations. An individual contract is required between an employer and each employee, but legal trade union activities may not be deemed to violate employee contracts. In the past, some local legal experts interpreted this provision as conferring the right to strike. However, under the law, strikes are illegal. During the year, foreign workers at various garment factories in the country carried out work stoppages to protest poor working and living conditions, as well as payroll deductions (see Section 6.e.). Brunei is not a member of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

##### b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The Government did not interfere with lawful union activity during the year. It is illegal to refuse employment or discriminate against an employee on the basis of membership or nonmembership in a trade union. The law is silent on collective bargaining, and it occurs in only a few industries. Wage and benefit packages are based on market conditions and tend to be generous.

There is a free trade zone in Muara Port, known as the Muara Export Zone (MEZ).

##### c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, and there are no reports that such practices occurred.

There were reports of domestic bondage under which foreign domestic workers work extremely long hours and are not permitted rest days. Their passports allegedly are held by employers to prevent their departure; there are as well anecdotal reports of such workers not being paid. Employment agents in Brunei and other

countries reportedly bring some workers to the country under false pretenses of well-paying jobs as teachers or shop assistants, only to later force them to accept jobs as laborers. Other workers, most notably in the garment industry, often are obliged to sign new employment contracts upon their arrival in the country that reduces their promised salaries through substantial monthly payments to their employment sponsors or agents. Living and working conditions for these persons generally are poor.

There were reports of Indonesians being trafficked to Brunei (see Section 6.f.).

The Government prohibits forced and bonded labor by children, and there were no reports that such practices occur.

#### d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

Various laws prohibit the employment of children below the age of 16. Parental consent and approval by the Labor Commission is required for those below the age of 18. Female minors under age 18 may not work at night or on offshore oil platforms. The Department of Labor (DOL), which is a part of the Ministry of Home Affairs, effectively enforces laws on the employment of children. There were no reports of violations of the child labor laws. The Government prohibits forced and bonded labor by children, and such practices are not known to occur (see Section 6.c.).

The Government adheres to the standards of ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labor.

#### e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

Due to the ongoing economic downturn, unemployment has grown in recent years. However, most citizens still command good salaries. There is no minimum wage. The standard workweek is Monday through Thursday and Saturday, with Friday and Sunday off, allowing for two 24-hour rest periods each week. Overtime is paid for work in excess of 48 hours per week, and double time is paid for work performed on legal holidays. Occupational health and safety standards are established by government regulations. The DOL inspects working conditions on a routine basis and in response to complaints. The DOL generally enforces labor regulations effectively. However, in the unskilled labor sector enforcement is lax, especially for foreign laborers (see Section 5). The DOL may close any workplace where health, safety, or working conditions are unsatisfactory, and it has done so in the past. The law permits a worker to leave a hazardous job site without jeopardizing his employment, but in practice this is unlikely to happen.

Approximately 80,000 foreign nationals work in the country. There were reports of cases of domestic bondage of foreign domestic workers (see Section 6.c.). There also have been isolated reports of employers physically beating domestic employees or not providing them adequate food. The Government has prosecuted some such cases; however, since most female domestics are foreign workers who are highly dependent on their employers, those subject to abuse may be unwilling or unable to bring complaints (see Sections 5, 6.c., and 6.f.).

About 20,000 foreigners work in the garment industry. Workers and observers have protested conditions in some factories in that industry, including inadequate accommodations, unsanitary facilities, and relatively large deductions from pay. Bangladesh reportedly no longer permits its nationals to work in garment factories in Brunei. The Philippine Embassy assisted some of its nationals who wanted to return to the Philippines due to poor living and working conditions at one garment factory (see Section 6.a.).

#### f. Trafficking in Persons

The Law for the Protection of Women and Girls prohibits trafficking in women and girls, whether or not for the purpose of prostitution. There are occasional reports of women entering the country for purposes of prostitution (which is illegal), but they usually are deported swiftly. Although there are no laws that specifically refer to trafficking in men and boys, there are laws that criminalize aspects of trafficking. There were reports that Indonesians were trafficked to the country to work in construction.

Employment agents in Brunei and other countries reportedly bring workers to the country from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and other countries under false promises of well-paying jobs as teachers or shop workers only to force them later to accept jobs as laborers or agricultural workers. There also were reports of employers confiscating the passports of domestic workers in order to prevent them from leaving the country (see Section 6.c.).